

Short Term Planning for May & June 2013

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
20	21	22	23	24 Early Years Funding Stops Over Half Term
27 Bank Holiday Closed	28 Dayle & Zoe Annual Leave	29 Dayle & Zoe Annual Leave	30 Dayle & Zoe Annual Leave	31
3 Full Staff Meeting 6.15-7.30	4	5	6 Denise on Training 10-3	7
10	11 Estelle absent Sitting an Exam	12	13	14 16th Father's Day
17	18	19	20 Lara on Training 10-3	21
24	25	26	27 Denise on Training 9.30-1	28
1 Full Staff Meeting 6.15-7.30	2	3	4	5

As part of our ongoing working in Partnership with Parents. Parents can help us by regularly completing the "My Favourite Things In.... Have Been" pages and Parent Quick Note sections, remember the info which you supply helps us to specifically gear our plans towards the current interests and developmental needs of your own child. Please remember to read your child's Daily Diary or Communication Booklet each day and **initial and date at the top** so that we know you have done so. Any comments should be written in the Parent Quick Note sections please.

Please note when your child's Keyworker is on Annual Leave or attending Training, this will mean that their 'buddy' will be completing your child's pages if they are away

Summer Term 2 - This half term the Over 2's, 3's & 4's are continuing to use **Traditional Tales** and the Under 2's will be focusing on **the Seaside and Holidays** as the basis for our activities and learning. We will be focusing on the following:

Over 2's, 3's & 4's

Goldilocks and the Three Bears
 Little Red Riding Hood
 Jack and the Beanstalk
 The Gingerbread Man
 Cooking - porridge, jam tarts, gingerbread men
 Growing beans
 Making castles - junk modelling



Under 2's

Sand Play
 Water Play
 Messy Exploration
 Trip to the Beach
 Outdoor Play
 Painting & Sticking for a
 Holiday Board - please could we have a postcard with a WOW moment if you go away?



As well as planned activities, we will also be noting, and following, the children's interests - who knows where that might lead us!



Grafton Childcare

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Our Weekly Blog

We have decided to start a blog to keep in touch with all of our parents about what we have been up to here at Grafton. We are not sure how often we will post, hopefully at least once a week giving you all an account of what we have been up to here at Grafton during the previous week and any plans we might have for the future. We hope that parents will pop in once a week to keep up to date with what has been or is happening. Denise will probably sit down on a Sunday evening and catch up and reflect on the week that has just past. So we guess Sunday evenings or Mondays would be a good time for you all to pop along and read our blog.

Remember we also have our weekly Food Blog where parents can check in to see what meals we have served during the past week, this is aimed at our 2, 3 and 4 year old children as all meals are written into the Daily Diaries of our under twos. However we don't have room for this information in the over 2's Communication Booklets.

So if you could please pop along to our website www.graftonchildcare.co.uk and look for the 4th tab on the left hand side of the screen titled "Our Weekly Blog" and scroll down to the week just gone so that you can keep up to date with allsorts that is happening here at Grafton. We intend to still send out our regular newsletters but are aware that the way that parents access information is rapidly changing and we need to move with the times and embrace the world wide web and modern technology as a whole. We now send out the majority of our newsletters as a pdf file to parents email accounts, which means that you can

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for Childminding

access them at a time which fits into your busy lifestyles and you can also forward them on to family and friends if you wish. You can also find copies of all of our previous newsletters archived on our newsletter page on our website.

If you have not yet given us an email address to which we can send copies of our newsletters and invoices, could you please email Denise and she will add you to our mailing list, denise@graftonchildcare.co.uk

Could we ask that those parents who still receive their newsletters in paper format that you remember to regularly check your child's bag and folder and **remove copies of any old or current newsletters**, so that we know that they have been read and the contents taken note of, thank you.



Staff Update

Many of you are already aware that sadly Sadie Beer will be leaving us at the end of May. She has been a very valued member of our team here at Grafton Childcare since July 2007 with a brief break in 2010 when she ventured off to Italy to become a Nanny and then returned to the fold here at Grafton Childcare.

Sadie is now embarking on the next two great adventures in her life which is motherhood and becoming self-employed. Over the next few months she plans to Register in her own right as a Registered Childminder in Buckfastleigh and hopefully will be up and running before the birth of her daughter in September.

We are having a collection towards a leaving gift for Sadie, if any parent would like to make a contribution please pop it into a sealed envelope and pass it to either Jade or Lara who are organising the purchase of some lovely girly bits and bobs from John Lewis. We shall of course announce the birth in our Autumn newsletter.

Angela Evemy will be replacing Sadie from the beginning on June we are at the moment looking at who Sadie's key children are and reallocating them over the next week when all parents will be getting a separate letter to inform them of any changes that have been made following Sadie's departure.



Instead we intend to now share these with parents at our formal Open Days, when parents can come in and view their child's "Learning Journal" and discuss more fully their own child's individual progress here at Grafton Childcare.

Open Mornings, Saturday 13th and 20th July



This is a quick reminder that on Saturday the 13th and 20th July, we shall be holding our Parent's Open Mornings for the Summer Term. These are for parents to come along and have a good look around the setting at what has changed over the past few months and take a peek at all of our lovely new resources and equipment which we are sure your children must have mentioned at home or we have enthused about during recent newsletters and on our blog.

You will also have the opportunity to look at your child's individual new "Learning Journal" and chat to either Estelle, Denise or Lara about the progress your children are making here at Grafton Childcare. We each only have 16 slots. We shall be offering 15 minute appointment slots starting promptly at 9 am and finishing at 1.00 on both Saturdays.

Those parents who have Angela as their key worker can book an appointment to see her on either Thursday the 11th or 18th July between 3 and 4 pm. Sadly she is not available to come on the Saturdays as she will be updating her Paediatric First Aid Training along with Dayle, Zoe and Julie.

We hope as many of you as possible will take this opportunity to come along so that we can share with you all of the wonderful things your children have been doing and get a snapshot of some of the exciting things we have planned for the 2013/14 academic year.

We shall print off the appointment sheets and place them by the signing in sheets as previously, if you are keen for a specific date and time then speak to your child's key worker or email Denise and we will see if the slot you would like is still available.

Learning Journals, Next Steps and Observations

We are not sure if the majority of parents are aware of the amount of time which the key workers spend on completing Observations on their key children and using this information to plan each child's individual Next Steps and then documenting all of this information either in their child's Daily Diary, Record of Observed Outcomes and or their Learning Journals. In some cases this information is actually triplicated unnecessarily.

In light of the comments made by Elizabeth Truss and in the document *More Great Childcare*, we have sat and reflected on exactly what, when and why we need to observe and record in order that we can plan for the Next Steps of each individual child in our care so that what we do is not only meaningful but also manageable for the staff to achieve.

We have now totally revamped the document which we formally called our "Learning Journals" and merged this with what was our "Record of Observed Outcomes" to make what we believe will be a more manageable, meaningful and useable document for your child's Key Worker to record the progress and development of your child through their Developmental Matters Outcomes whilst in our care, this will not be a tick list but an effective means of documenting and collating lots of information in one place and not spread across numerous documents as at present.

We have uploaded a pdf version of Grafton Childcare's new Learning Journal to our website and it can be found on the page named aptly Learning Journals! It would be lovely if you could find a few minutes to download this document and have a look through it, we welcome any comments you might have on our plans.

We are still very keen to continue to work in partnership with parents and one of the ways that you can do so is to continue to complete your child's Daily Diary's or Communication Booklet's, **My Favourite Things** pages at the end of each month and send in regular **Wow** cards from home about your child's progress and achievements when not attending Grafton Childcare.

This week we shall be sending home a "**Working in Partnership Sheet**" for each child. This sheet will contain details of any planned activities which we have identified which we would like to carry out with your child over the next half-term including any which are linked to our current topics on Traditional Tales for our 2, 3 and 4 year olds and the Seaside and Holidays for our under 2's.

At the bottom of this sheet will also be set out details of the specific Next Steps which we have identified we would like to work on with your child during the next half-term. We shall no longer be sending home our more formal Next Steps plans, but keeping those in your child's "Learning Journal" here at Grafton. We have taken this decision because only a very small number of these were being taken out of the child's bags, read, completed by parents and returned.

Clothing & Belongings

We cannot be responsible for lost items of clothing or footwear, especially those which are not labelled. Recently we have spent a huge amount of time trying to repatriate items of clothing, which have not been labelled, and introduced a lost property bin which is kept just inside the conservatory door so that parents can look through it themselves to see if any of the unlabeled items belong to their children and thus free up staff time. Sainsbury's, Tesco, and WHSmiths all sell Laundry Marker Pens in their stationery isles we highly recommend you purchase one and save both staff and parents the stress involved in trying to locate and repatriate unlabeled belongings, thank you for your continued cooperation. If you should end up with a piece of clothing which does not belong to your child, please return it and pop a not into your child's Daily Diary or Communication Booklet so we are aware and can then pop it into lost property.

Children should arrive dressed for play. We like to have fun! Having fun involves outdoor play and lots of messy activities, so make sure that your child is dressed appropriately. Please don't dress your child in their best clothing or expect them to be spotless when you arrive to pick them up, if we are going on an outing somewhere that requires your child to be dressed in something other than play clothes we shall inform you in advance so that you have the option to include another outfit for such a purpose. Clothing should be comfortable and seasonally appropriate for outdoor play everyday of the year.

Remember that we use our own washable nappies and to allow for this when dressing your child, trousers and leggings which are tight or snug over disposable nappies, will not fit over our washable nappies. We would prefer that once your child is being potty/toilet trained that you do not send them in dungarees or trousers with belts, as they are too difficult for your child to undo unaided.

Make sure you include sun hats and sandals or canvas shoes for warmer weather and warm hats, mittens, boots and coats for cold weather. Please do not send you child over two years with shoes with laces or buckles, unless they are able to fasten them themselves. The children take their shoes off and on frequently during the day when going from inside to outside. They need to be able to tie the shoelaces themselves or wear shoes with Velcro fastenings which they can operate.

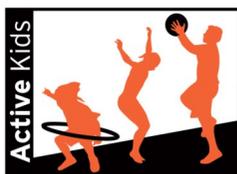
Please remember that we need one pair of clearly labelled slippers, wellington boots, lightweight raincoat (pack-a-mac style) and sun hat left here at Grafton Childcare at all times. We prefer that children do not bring toys from home little ones can have a difficult time sharing with others, and it is even harder with their own special toys. If toys are brought please note that they will be left in

their bag until it is time to leave if they are the cause of disagreements among the children. Exceptions to this policy will be that a child may bring a favourite sleepy toy for naptime only, and toys may be brought for show and tell and circle time activities. We are not responsible for any loss or breakage of personal items including clothing, toys and jewellery. All personal items should be clearly marked with your child's name we highly recommend the Sharpie Laundry Maker Pens they are fantastic for this purpose.

Sainsbury's Active Kids Vouchers

We are still collecting the Sainsbury's Active Kids until the end of May 2013 when the scheme ends in stores and petrol stations, although we have until early July to send off our order. So far we have collected 3,799. Last year we collected 2,704 vouchers which meant we were able to redeem them for an amazing array of equipment and toys for the children to use here. This year we are aiming for some space hoppers and lots of sensory equipment for the under twos to explore with.

Any Sainsbury's vouchers you are able to collect would be very much appreciated. Please send them in to us in your child's Daily Diary or Communication Booklet folder and we shall whisk them away. If you could also ask your family, friends and work colleagues if they would feel able to collect for us if they are not already collecting for another school or nursery, we would be very grateful. The Tesco's Vouchers Scheme is starting later on in the year.



Thank You - A Tribute to Georgia

For helping us to raise **£100.00**
towards the Tribute to Georgia

Thank You

We would like to say a huge thank you to the parents of the following children:- Oliver, Bobby, Sophie, Tyler, Charlie, William, Lewis, Thea and Jazzy, who have donated Baby Books, Tissue Paper, Foam Shapes & Pipe Cleaners, Happyland & Bath Toys, Bob the Builder Duplo & a Dumper Truck, Junior Magazines and Junk Modelling Items.

We really appreciate all of the items which parents very kindly pass on to us here at Grafton Childcare, thank you so much for your continued generosity.



There is no requirement to fill in learning journeys. For each individual child there are just 2 pieces of writing: the 2-and-a-half year check and the EYFSP. And Clare Tickell in her report on the EYFS made very clear her view that adult direction was not inconsistent with the requirement of the EYFS for planned, purposeful play. She said that: Adults should be modelling, demonstrating and questioning. To exclude elements of teaching from the early years would increase the risk of children not being ready for the move to key stage 1.

Of course that also means exercising professional judgement according to the children's stage of development, or about the time of day things happen, or about what group structures are appropriate, or where a child may need something else. To this end, we're working with Ofsted to make sure that all documents reflect this approach.

The whole of government must be concerned about child development, and work together towards better outcomes. The Department for Education and the Department of Health are working together to implement an integrated review at age 2-and-a-half. The Healthy Child Programme already requires a health review at age 2, 2-and-a-half, and since September 2012 in the new EYFS there has been a requirement for parents to be provided with a written summary at age 2 of their children's progress in the EYFS prime areas of learning. By 2015, we want to integrate these 2 processes.

Our drive for higher standards is a recognition of the fact that the area in which you work is of immense importance. The stakes could scarcely be higher when we are talking about 2-year-olds, all of whom are infinitely precious and all of whom - no matter where they come - deserve the very best start in life.

Elizabeth Truss, Department of Education

We hope that you found this article interesting and useful and that you managed to read it all, all be it an edited version. We found the speech both refreshing and very useful as it was able to clarify many common myths which are held both nationally and here locally in Devon amongst settings and also some local authorities. We recently held a senior management meeting and were able to reflect on this speech and other changes which will be implemented in September as part of the document published in January "More great childcare - raising quality and giving parents more choice". This document includes:

- ⊙ *a vision for early education and childcare;*
- ⊙ *the case for change; a plan of action;*
- ⊙ *raising the status and quality of the workforce;*
- ⊙ *freeing high quality providers to offer more places;*
- ⊙ *improving the regulatory regime;*
- ⊙ *giving more choice to parents*

20 minutes. I was captivated - and so were they. In fact, the 1 boy who had left to go and play with Lego came back because he felt he was missing out. I also saw 26 3-year-olds all following the steps of a dance teacher. There is a real culture in French nurseries of socialisation and interaction, rather than excessive tailoring to each child, which can mean that they miss out on the chance to take part in a purposeful activity together. There is also a premium on manners. In the best French nurseries that I saw, the children are recognisably happy and confident, and eager to learn. I saw teachers working very effectively on the kids' vocabulary. They are even taught logic!

For their part, the French have also found much to like about nurseries in this country and also our regulatory structures through Ofsted. This exchange of ideas and best practice on an international level is thoroughly welcome.

There are various myths about practice which sometimes can prevent the development of different ways of doing things and inhibit professionals developing their knowledge. It can also prevent new providers entering the sector with new ideas.

So I want to clarify the position of the government. The EYFS is a framework that sets out the standards expected for children's learning and development, and for their safety and wellbeing. It is not a straitjacket that requires professionals to operate in one particular way. And beyond the EYFS, there is no central guidance, because we expect professionals to take the lead - just as we do throughout the education system.

For example, Development Matters is not statutory - it just outlines one possible approach and helps underpin inspections, rather than dictating. **And we are reforming the role of local authorities so that their focus is on the champions of children and parents, not on setting out methodologies that nurseries should follow. And local authorities will no longer be able to withhold funding for not following their way of doing things.**

From September Ofsted will have a revised framework for the early years. This framework will be more focused on child outcomes than any specific methodology. This will give early years professionals more freedom to tailor teaching to the specific needs of the children in their care.

Let me dispel a few other common myths. These are things I have heard visiting nurseries that they tell me they are expected to do. I want to point out that they are required by neither government nor Ofsted: Free-flow play between outdoors and indoors is not a requirement and not something Ofsted is looking for.

There is not a requirement to have a certain amount of child-led activity. There is no reason why children should not be part of structured groups and be encouraged to interact with each other.

New Toys & Resources



Since our last newsletter we have been busy adding new equipment and resources for the children to use here at Grafton, just this weekend we have taken delivery of some Community Playthings Hollow Blocks and the most amazing wooden Kiddi Truck.

As you can see from the photos the children have already been putting these to good use outside. We have also purchased a whole set of Play-panels for our role-play area, see our Blog for more details!

We have bought a very large 1.8 x 1.2 meter notice-board which Phil has popped up in the classroom for the children to display their Characteristics of Effective Learning. We have also purchased an "Easi-Speak" which the

children have been using to record their voices and sounds on the move with this easy-to-use microphone. They have been recording their own versions of some of the classic fairytales and then listening back to them on our "Easi-Speak Sound Station" which is tuff and portable and ideal for outdoor use.

We have also purchased an A3 LED Light Panel, which both the big and little ones have enjoyed using to investigate and explore pattern, shape, colour, opacity and transparency. Aesthetically pleasing with its sleek appearance and rounded edges it is ideal for use here with even the youngest children for sensory exploration.



2-Year-Olds Policy and Practice

In April Elizabeth Truss the Education Minister gave a speech at the Nursery World Conference about 2-year-olds policy and practice . I have included an edited version of that speech here, anybody who would like to read the whole version, may email Denise for a copy, but we hope that this will give you a flavour of what was said.

I am really pleased to be here, to outline the government's policies in relation to 2-year-olds our early learning programme will be open to 2-year-olds who are looked-after or whose background would make them eligible for free school meals. They will be offered 570 hours of early learning a year, which will typically be taken as 15 hours a week, but doesn't have to be. There are promising signs that we are on track to deliver 130,000 places this September. These children can then continue to benefit from early education at 3 and 4, when all children can get 15 hours of it. But we have more work to do to meet our commitment to ensure all eligible 2-year-olds get a high quality place.

This programme will be transformational. We know how important early education is. 96% of parents already take up their child's place for their 3- and 4-year-olds. But only 37% of 2-year-olds from the poorest 40% of families access any formal early education, compared to 78% of their richer peers. All of us recognise the unfairness of a young child's background having a lasting impact.

We are giving local authorities £525 million to fund 2-year-old places. There will be an average hourly rate of £5.09 across England. Every area will receive funding that equates to between £4.85 and £6.07 per hour, (in Devon we will receive £4.96). We have told local authorities to pass all available funding on to providers so that they can provide sustainable, high-quality places.

But they must be good providers. The early education for 2-year-olds pilot (which Grafton took part in) showed that higher-quality settings have a positive impact on language ability at age three. In addition, across the scheme, parents typically felt that such settings had improved their parenting skills. All of which is a reminder of how important it is that local authorities are expected to fund places in settings that are rated good or outstanding by Ofsted.

Settings that have a graduate leader have significantly improved outcomes, especially with language and literacy. And once again, these benefits are particularly acute for disadvantaged children. Crucially, not only are trained teachers the most effective in their interactions with children, but their supervision of less well-qualified staff made those staff better as well.

I also want those working with children to have a good understanding of proven theories. Attachment theory would be one of these. It is well-established that secure bonds between children and adults provide safety, security and also help children learn to socialise and form new relationships with their peers.

Just as there is no contradiction between structured, teacher-led learning and play, there is no contradiction between education and enjoyment! One of the great joys of young children is their sense of wonder and curiosity about the world.

It is still concerning that there are so few teachers employed in early years and that 70% of settings do not take advantage of the higher ratios and graduate leadership. Our analysis suggests that it is affordable for nurseries but sometimes there is a resistance to the idea of larger groups.

That is why I am pleased that Ofsted has confirmed today that qualifications will be critical in how they judge a setting - with a view to getting many more qualified graduates into the sector. Ofsted has already adjusted the focus to be more heavily upon outcomes. Today Ofsted is announcing a greater focus in their inspection regime on qualifications, because it considers this a key to making it happen. Settings will be judged against a new framework from September, including a 'requires improvement' category. Ofsted proposes to re-inspect them within 24 months if they are judged to fall into that category. Since September Ofsted has started keeping records of qualifications held by staff, which will be updated at every inspection.

I am absolutely clear that - although we should have strong accountability - we should give high quality providers more autonomy. Just as we are doing in schools where academies and free schools have greater freedom, so I want to see the same for the best practitioners in the early years sector. After all, there are lots of good ways to do early education - and although poor settings quite often look the same, 2 outstanding settings rarely do.

Too often moves by government or local authorities are interpreted as directions. I am clear that whereas government should set the 'what' and hold providers to account, it is for teachers and professionals to determine the 'how'. I want to see confident practitioners, availing themselves of the best available evidence to deliver the early years foundation stage (EYFS) in the way they see fit, so long as outcomes for children are good. I also want to see practitioners well-versed in the evidence.

We are seeking out good interaction between adults and children as well as encouragement for children to work with each other. For example, Toad Hall Nursery Group has family rooms in their nurseries, similar to a model which is popular in Scandinavia (we use a similar model here at Grafton). Children aged between 2 and 5 learn and play together. Not only is the development of younger children boosted, but the older children behave better.

I went to France this week to look again at how they do things there. There is a strong focus on structured learning, led by a qualified professional. I saw a teacher lead 8 2-year-olds in putting together a series of plastic discs for a good